SPYMAKER: The Science of Spying

Future Spy call for ideas

SPYMAKER: The Science of Spying is a popular science exhibition opening at the Science Museum in February 2007 and touring internationally for 5 years.

We invite your ideas, submitted as concept sketches and explanatory text, for surveillance and counter-surveillance products of the near future (in 20 years time). These will be exhibited as 'prototypes in the research lab of a technology conglomerate'.

Selected concepts will be developed for exhibition by product designers, we would therefore like ideas for plausible (could happen) and credible (can be explained) future products but do not expect detailed designs for real or workable products.

Concept sketches should be accompanied by a 250 – 500 word scenario explaining what the product does, why it is necessary and who will use it. This explanation should include a brief history, scenario or aspect of future society that the product responds to.

You might find it helpful to think about the following:

- How do you imagine the world of the near future? How and where do surveillance and counter-surveillance fit into it?
- Which technological trends will become more important or widespread in the next 20 years? Which will diminish or disappear?
- Which issues and circumstances will shape our daily lives? Which of these conditions make your product relevant or necessary?

The following trends and questions about the future have been developed by *The Science of….* in association with leading scientists, sociologists and futurologists. It is not necessary to make a direct response to any of them but they indicate the type of scenario we'd like you to use as the starting point for your design.

Technology directions

- Tracking and surveillance technologies will become so small that they are virtually invisible to the human eye
- We will hide this microscopic technology in clothes, in miniature flying machines and anywhere else we can think of
- We will be able to implant ever more complex digital technology into humans
- Within different settings and communities (home, work, school and play) our relationships and identities will be defined digitally rather than physically
- We will rely on machines that read our biometrics (our iris fingerprints and our DNA) to identify us – this is unique and valuable information that others could record without us knowing
- Reduced costs and easy availability will put spying technologies in the hands of almost anyone
- As RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) tags become much more secure, they will replace barcodes and open up the possibility of tracking files, patients, clubbers and anything else that can be tagged
- Increased computing power will make it easier to capture and analyse all kinds of data: images, text, phone calls etc
- In a world populated with traceable and readable people, computer systems will be able to make instant, automatic decisions about our identity and, therefore, what we can and can't do
- Technology will increasingly be used at a distance – capturing, analysing and classifying data about us without our knowledge

Societal questions

- Does increased surveillance make us safer from criminals and terrorists?
- Is it more important to *be* secure or to *feel* secure? How can you tell the difference?
- When does routine, everyday surveillance become an invasion of your privacy?
- What happens if biometric systems wrongly identify you? You could become someone else or someone else could become you.
- Are the new tracking technologies just a way of increasing efficiency for everyone, or could they be misused by those who can't resist learning more about us?
- If we learn to trust new surveillance technologies, what will our attitude be to people (family, friends, employees etc) and companies (employers, supermarkets etc) that pass or fail digital identity tests?
- Would we be safer if we could give human spies superhuman senses?

Design considerations

Selected concepts will be developed by product designers, therefore at this stage ideas are more important than quality of design or presentation.

Future products might be exhibited on open display or behind glass.

It is not necessary to provide exact dimensions but we imagine objects will be hand-held or wearable human scale.

Ideas should be easily communicable to 8 - 12 year olds with minimal explanatory text. Also consider how this audience group might understand or relate to your product.

Process

Entries will be judged by our exhibition development team.

Ideas judged to best fit our communication aims will be presented to product designers for possible development and realisation.

The product designers involved in the project are:

Auger-Loizeau	www.auger-loizeau.com
Dunne & Raby	www.dunneandraby.co.uk
El Ultimo Grito	www.elultimogrito.co.uk
Noam Toran	www.noamtoran.com
Onkar Singh Kular	www.kularsoflondon.com
Troika	www.troika.uk.com

Product designers will select and develop approximately 5 of the concept sketches to detailed design stage. Model-makers will make ‘prototypes’ from these detailed designs for exhibition in SPYMAKER.

Terms

We will pay £250 for an initial concept sketch and idea selected for development.

Ideas selected for development will be licensed under a Creative Commons ‘attribution’ license. This license ensures that you retain copyright for the idea but allows us to copy, distribute and display the copyrighted design and derivative works based upon it provided that we credit you appropriately.

Those whose ideas are selected will be credited in the exhibition but will have no further involvement in the development process.

Rules

This is an international call for ideas open to anyone.

All entries must be original work, not in current production or previous publication or exhibition. By submitting a design you warrant that it does not infringe any third party's right including copyright, logos, trademark, trade names or other proprietary rights of publicity or privacy.

Entries must be received by 5pm on Friday 29 September 2006.

If your design is selected for development you will be notified by email. If you have not heard from us by 31 October 2006 please assume that your design was not selected.

The judges' decision is final.

How to submit your ideas

Concept sketches should be sent as jpg or pdf files to **futurespy@scienceof.com** along with textual explanations (as outlined above), your name, email address and brief biographical information.

Emails should have a maximum file size of 5MB but entries can be sent on more than one email.